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CHAL-0749
Copy 6 of 10

21 September 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Chief, Development Projects Division

THROUGH: Chief, Administrative Branch, DFD

SUBJECT: Proposed Action to Combat Unfavorable Publicity
Appearing in Honolulu Press and UPI BULLETIN
Concerning Project CHALICE

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for action in paragraph 8 to be considered in by the Acting Chief, DFD.

2. Attached for your information is a photostatic copy of an article appearing in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, dated 10 September 1959 (Attachment A) and also a copy of the text of a UPI Bulletin, dateline Honolulu 10 September, which was picked circuit through the base communications system (Attachment B) both of which deal with the Project CHALICE mission. We have also been advised that a similar news article appeared 13 September in an Athens English daily newspaper. As yet, we have no indication that the information was published in any other organ.

3. These news articles have been discussed in detail with [redacted] and a cleared representative of the Air Force Pacific Information Office. It is our opinion that the news articles were not as a result of a leakage of Project CHALICE information, but instead were obviously prompted by the appearance of an AEC U-2 aircraft at Hickam AFB, Honolulu, Hawaii, in connection with a Project DISCOVERER retrieval effort during August 1959. This matter was publicized in the 15 August 1959 edition of the Honolulu Advertiser (Attachment C). As you may recall, the DFD authorized AEC and AFEC to utilize the U-2 for this purpose, subject to the operating altitude restriction of 55,000 feet to prevent disclosure of maximum altitude capabilities to uncleared SC-121 crewmen involved in the DISCOVERER retrieval effort.

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4. The "no comment" by USAF, Washington, D.C., officials referred to in the UPI Bulletin is equally unfortunate. We understand that this was issued by [REDACTED] Air Force Information Services, as a result of a telephone call from a Washington UPI representative on the evening of 11 September. Although we have not ascertained what specifically was said by [REDACTED] on this occasion, we do understand that the UPI Bulletin took his statement out of context and did not reflect the true connotation of his words. Obviously, had proper coordination been effected, this would have been an opportune time to rebut the article.

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5. On the occasion of the earlier August 1959 Espey Advertiser article the AFM considered an approach to AFMCO requesting that they consider declassification of the IR capability in the AFMCO U-2. AFMCO agreed, and the AFM had under consideration announcing to the press the true IR mission of the AFMCO U-2 on occasion of the next DISCOVERER retrieval effort. In our opinion this should be done notwithstanding the possibility of a future clandestine U-2 IR requirement.

6. There are certain statements and implications appearing in the article by Mr. Mark Waters which are untrue. They are:

a. The AFMCO U-2 operating from Hickam AFB was not painted black, but instead was silver colored with standard Air Force markings.

b. The Air Force has never operated a U-2 aircraft from outside the Western Hemisphere.

c. There has never been a U-2 aircraft on Formosa other than on the occasion of an emergency landing in September 1958.

d. It would be suicidal for any airman to ride the wings of a U-2 aircraft on take-off.

e. The U-2 operating from Hickam AFB was not engaged in a clandestine overflight of Chinese territory.

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7. It is our belief, therefore, that [REDACTED] article represents nothing more than good research of newspaper morgue files pertaining to the U-2 aircraft, confused to some extent with information he may have obtained on Formosa concerning the [REDACTED] program utilizing the [REDACTED]. The article is extremely irresponsible reporting and rank sensationalism. From what we

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have been able to learn concerning [REDACTED] this is in conformity with his character. We believe, however, that the article is extremely damaging to the Project, and it is for this reason that we recommend an affirmative rebuttal, rather than a "no comment" approach to the problem at this time. It is our belief that there are many responsible-type newspapermen in the United States who for sometime may have been suspect of our operations, but because they are Americans first and newspapermen second, have chosen not to pry but to instead accept the given explanations. It is feared that [REDACTED] article may represent an indication that there has been a "leak" and that they need no longer exercise discretion. It is our belief that by careful rebuttal, we may inform these gentlemen the manner in which the United States Government desires to conclude this incident.

3. With your concurrence we will proceed with the following action:

a. The DFD Cover Officer has prepared a letter for signature of Brig. [REDACTED] Director of Public Information, USAF, addressed to the editor of the Memphis Star-Bulletin pointing out the false information in [REDACTED] article and the embarrassment to the U. S. Government caused by such irresponsible reporting and leaving the editor to take such action as he sees fit. (See Attachment D)

b. Take action requesting [REDACTED] to contact the UPI correcting the false connotation given to his words in the UPI Bulletin and also pointing out the false information in the Star-Bulletin article.

c. Arrange to publish the true mission of the ARDC U-2 in conjunction with the next DISCOVERER retrieval effort.

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[REDACTED]
Security Officer
DFD-DB/P

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CONCURRENCE:

Acting Chief, DFD-ED/P

Date

COORDINATION:

EDF Cover Officer

Attachments:

As cited

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